

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2012*

**Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City**  
*January 19, 2012*

*The President.* Hello! Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you. You're going to make me blush. *[Laughter]* Well, it is wonderful to be back in New York, and it is wonderful to be with all of you.

I understand that you already had a chance to talk with the outstanding junior Senator from New York, and Kirsten is doing a wonderful job, so all of you guys should be very proud. I'm sure that a number of you supported her in previous campaigns and will continue to do so.

As I look around the room, I see some old friends—not in years, but—some of you in years—*[laughter]*—but who have known me for a very long time, people who supported me in my first U.S. Senate race—Andy supported me in my first State senate race.

*Audience member.* Bobby Rush.

*The President.* That's exactly right.

I'm going to speak very briefly at the top because I want to spend most of my time in conversation. We're obviously living through a historic time. We just went through the worst financial crisis in our history since the Great Depression—worst financial crisis. We have an Arab Spring that is transforming an entire region of the world. The structure of the global economy, the changes in technology all are happening at a breathless pace.

And I think that—when I think back to the last 3 years, I could not be prouder of what we've been able to do in averting a depression, saving an auto industry. We've now seen 22 consecutive months of job growth in the private sector. We're starting to see manufacturing come back to the United States.

On the international stage, we've been able to manage the end of one war and the beginning of a transition of another. We have been on the right side of democracy. We've strengthened our alliances, restored respect for the United States around the world.

On issues of equity and the values that we care most deeply about, we've made enormous advances: ending "don't ask, don't tell," making sure that equal pay for equal work is—*[applause]*—appointing two really smart women to the Supreme Court.

But we have so much more work to do. We've got so many things that remain to tackle. We have an economy that, although now is getting close to where we were before the financial crisis struck, continues to struggle with these long-term trends that had been going on for decades, where middle class families felt less and less secure, where the education system wasn't equipping our kids to compete in a global economy, where we had an absence of an energy policy, a health care system that was bleeding companies and the Federal Treasury dry, and not providing any care for millions of people.

And so part of our task is to tell a story about everything that we've gotten done over the last 3 years so that people have confidence that change is possible. It's not easy, it's messy. There are times where it's frustrating, sometimes we experience setbacks, but change occurs, meaningful change that concretely helps people's lives. But even as we tell that story, we've also got to tell a story about where this country needs to go.

I've never felt more confident about the capacity of America to meet the moment and assure a solid future for our kids and our grandkids. But it's going to require more work, and it's going to require us making good choices. And this year is going to be as stark a choice as we have seen—a starker choice than we saw in 2008.

I mean, think about it. In 2008, I was running against a Republican nominee who agreed that we should ban torture, agreed that we should close Guantanamo, believed in climate change, had worked on immigration reform. And so as profound as the differences were between myself and John McCain, there was some sense of convergence when it came to some very important issues.

If you've been listening to the Republican debates, they have moved. *[Laughter]* I've stayed here. *[Laughter]* They've gone in a different direction.

Now, that's going to make for a hugely important, hugely consequential election, partly because we need to win this election to consolidate all the gains that we've made over the last 3 years and make sure that financial reform is actually implemented effectively and not watered down, and somebody like a Richard Cordray as the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is able to prevent people from being subjected to predatory lending, partly because health care reform still has to be implemented.

We already have 2.5 million young people who have insurance because of that bill and millions of seniors who are saving money on prescription drugs because of that bill. But there are a whole bunch of folks with preexisting conditions who are still going to need help and a whole bunch of working families who still don't have health insurance, and they're going to need those exchanges that we're setting up put in place so that they can get affordable health care.

But it's not just a matter of implementing many of the things we've already done. It's a matter of meeting the requirements to get to where we need to go. We're going to have to solve this fiscal crisis that we're in, in a way that's balanced and fair, and in which everybody does their fair share.

We're going to have to make sure that we are investing in community colleges and early childhood education so that everybody genuinely has a fair shot. We're going to have to rebuild America. In a city like New York, we've got tens, hundreds of billions of dollars of infrastructure work where we could put construction workers, right now, who are sitting at home, back to work, making ourselves more productive to meet the challenges of a 21st-century economy.

We're going to have to make sure that the budgets for the NIH and NSF and all our basic research in science is maintained so that we continue to be the leading innovators in the world.

We're going to have to make sure that all the work we've done over the last 3 years to restore America's standing in the world, that that's preserved, and that people everywhere continue to see America as the one indispensable nation in assuring that there's an international order that thinks about everybody and not just thinks in terms of raw power.

So this is a big deal, this race. And I am very confident about our prospects. As tough as the economic environment is, as many headwinds as we're experiencing, I believe we're going to win. But that belief is premised on my confidence in you, that you guys are going to step up, that you are going to show the same kind of resolve and determination and enthusiasm that you showed in 2008.

If you do, then I think we'll win the argument, because I think we have a better vision for the future. And I continue to have this profound confidence and faith in the American people and that a vision of a America that gives everybody opportunity and is inclusive and considers our values important to project around the world and in our own Government—I think that's what they want to—that's how they think about America as well.

So I hope all you guys are ready to go——

*Audience member.* Fired up.

*The President.* I hope you're fired up. [*Laughter*] And I don't—I'm glad you guys wrote checks, but I don't just want your money. I'm going to want your ideas and your time and your energy and your effort. And if you give me that, I promise you I will be working harder this time than I did in 2008. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in the Bellcour reception area at the Daniel restaurant. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Obama Victory Fund 2012 fundraisers :: New York City.

*Locations:* New York City.

*Names:* Cordray, Richard A.; Gillibrand, Kirsten; Kagan, Elena; McCain, John S.; Rush, Bobby L.; Sotomayor, Sonia M.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Commerce, international : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Improvement; Education : Standards and school accountability; Elections : 2012 Presidential and congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; New York : Democratic Party events; New York : President's visit; Science and technology : Research and development; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201200039.